

**GOLDSMITHS
University of London**

COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2012

Present: Ms Mary Stacey (Chair), Ms Ellen Tsang, Mrs Liz Bromley, Mr Gerald Lidstone, Dr Andrea Gilroy, Professor Frank Bond, Ms Vicky Annand, Miss Rachel Soper, Miss Sally Townsend

Apologies: Professor Richard Grayson, Professor Nick Couldry

In attendance: Mrs Fatma Ali (Secretary), Ms Geni Hughes-d'Aeth (for item 8) Ms Rosemary Bidwell (for item 9) Ms Bernadette Barnes (for item 10) Mrs Min Rodriguez-Davies (for item 12) Ms Rody Bristow-Jones (for item 13)

OPEN BUSINESS

1 MINUTES

Resolved:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2012 be approved.

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Chair announced that the College had been excited about the appointment of the new Director of Human Resources due to start mid-January 2012 and thanked the Interim Director of Human Resources for her work.

The Committee agreed that student applications had been successful this academic year especially in regard to the undergraduate home/EU numbers. The Director of Finance stated that the postgraduate applications had fallen short but this had not been an issue as the finances would off-set against each other.

The Interim Director of Human Resources explained that discussions with the Trade Unions had been underway, however since then the temporary HR Business Partner (Policies and Practice) had left the College leaving the department in need of recruiting a replacement to continue to take this forward.

It was noted that one of the outcomes from the recent Joint Negotiation Consultative Committee meetings indicated that the scope of the Policies project had been bigger than anticipated and therefore a longer-term appointment may be required to make the policy work more effective.

3 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY

Received:

The Conflict of Interest policy (12-300)

4 AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

Received:

The Standing Orders in force for 2012-2013 (12-299)

5 TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP

Received:

The Terms of Reference, Composition and Membership in force for 2012-2012(12-411)

The Committee discussed the vacant role of the independent student or staff member, which would need to be approved at the discretion of Council. It had been agreed that an independent student would be valuable in this Committee. It was resolved to ask Council to exercise its discretion to nominate to fill the vacancy.

6 ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL

Received:

The draft Annual Report to Council (12-412). The Committee asked for some improvements to be made to the report.

7 VT PROJECT

Received:

Visiting Tutor (VT) Project update (12-413)

The VT Project Manager explained that the main Project Report had been distributed to the main stakeholders and that updates and changes were being made to the report. It was reported that the College had been in a position to start the negotiations with the Trade Unions, however this had proven to be more challenging than anticipated due to participants' responsibilities and availability over diary commitments. The unions had been anxious with regard to the multiplier and UCU had confirmed the need to ballot for 6 weeks, which would delay the project. The Interim Director of Human Resources explained that the negotiations would have to be made around the concept of the multiplier and there different views as between management and the unions as to the appropriate multiplier to apply to the teaching time to accurately reflect the workload of the Visiting Tutors. The Director of Finance confirmed that the back pay had been ready to be made and that this could be paid before Christmas.

The Interim Director of Human Resources also stated that the assimilation would have a significant impact on the future of the College's usage of VT/ATs and would lead to an increase of staff numbers in the departments.

The Chair stated that the project had to move forward and that the College's aim was to ensure that payments to Visiting Tutors were made as it is approaching 6 years since the national agreement was concluded.

The Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Communications asked whether there had been a communications plan set up for this project.

The VT Project Manager stated that there had been briefing sessions scheduled for the month of November but a degree of consensus was required with the unions before communication could begin. It was also stated that more clarity had been required with regard to the spending round as the focus of the project still needed to be around student needs, budgets and business as usual.

The Director of Finance stated that the budget would continue to be a central issue.

The VT Project Manager stated that she would be leaving the College by the end of the month as the post would no longer be a full time role but she would be willing to come and support the negotiations.

8 ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS AND PROGRESSION PROJECT

Received:

Academic Promotions and Progression Project update (12-414)

The Chair stated that the Appeals panel she had attended in the morning had been very well planned and organised.

The Interim Human Resources Project Manager stated that the aim had been to improve the process for Academic Promotions and Progression for the next promotions process.

The Committee agreed that more specifics and criteria had been required as currently the way the criteria had been set out disadvantaged those who are not Researchers. It was also noted that the promotions process had been labelled 'Academics' which disadvantaged those who were non-academics (i.e. professional services staff).

The Interim Equalities and Diversity Adviser asked whether the process had been impact assessed.

The Interim Human Resources Project Manager stated that further data needed to be captured over time. It was reported that the working group had been looking at promotions for those who were less Research orientated.

The Interim Equalities and Diversity Adviser stated that we needed to have the data going back at least 2 years in terms of who had applied, who got a promotion and all the unsuccessful candidates. She explained that going forward, this data should be reviewed.

The Chair stated that the sub-group should take this forward and also focus on the appeals process with emphasis on premature applications and managing expectations.

It was also reported that there had only been 2 appeals this year, which, under the overall schemes, signified a level of achievement.

The VT Project Manager highlighted that once the VTs were assimilated, they too would then qualify to apply for promotions. This would again have a significant impact on operational services to accommodate the significant increase in the number of applications.

9 WORKFORCE INFORMATION

Received:

Human Resources Systems and Information update (12-415).

The Human Resources Systems and Information Manager stated that she had been at her final testing for I-Grasp and that a communications plan had been drawn up. It was also reported that a replacement temporary Human Resources Systems Officer was to be recruited following the departure of the previous incumbent.

It was also reported that management reports had now been provided from the Pyramid System, which focused on headcount, equality and diversity data and employment status. These reports had been made available to Business Partners so that they can take the data to their clients so the College could work towards a real cleansing of the information, including clarification of the current establishment, accurately matched with the departmental structures.

The Interim Director of Human Resources stated that with regards to the i-grasp system, in future, Phase 2 of the project meant that managers would be required to do most of the recruitment activity themselves. She asked Committee members to help with the communications regarding the benefits of the system which Goldsmiths had committed to some years' ago and to actively encourage their staff to use the system.

The Director of Finance explained that as these were the systems the College had at the moment, they had no other choice but to use them. She also reported that the Pyramid system would be reviewed in the Finance department next year.

The Interim Equalities and Diversity Adviser stated that there may have been issues around who was entering the sensitive information on to the system. The concern related specifically to Data Protection.

The Director of Finance stated that payroll staff may have to be given further training to handle confidential data, which fell within the Data Protection Act. She also stated that the Payroll section had a private room where inductions took place for new appointees.

The Committee also discussed the disclosure of disability on the Payroll Self-Service and agreed that this information had not been captured effectively as staff had held back from disclosing this protected characteristic.

The Committee agreed that further discussions around elements of the induction process would be discussed at the 3 day Process Fix Workshop in the coming week, which was due to focus on new Staff Starters.

10 CASEWORK

Received:

Casework update report (12-416)

The Committee was pleased to see that a number of cases had been resolved especially since the last Committee meeting.

The Registrar and Secretary stated that the number of long term sickness cases highlighted some management challenges and commented on how the Committee could assist in the culture of decreasing long term sickness cases and making staff feel better about their jobs.

The Committee felt that it would be a good idea to have procedures for panel members who are asked to be on a panel for an employee relations case. This would assist with understanding their roles and their powers and duties.

The Interim Director of Human Resources stated that this would form part of the policies' work, as Managers' Guidelines would be provided along with the actual policies themselves.

11 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Interim Equalities and Diversity Adviser stated that it had been a busy time with the focus of her work having revolved around the review of where the College was at and where they wanted to be with regard to Equality and Diversity. She stated that the College had a responsibility to report against the 8 protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 but as of yet there had been no information collected on 3 particular characteristics. She also stated that the College had to focus on how to collect information especially areas where people had opted not to disclose, such as Disability. She expressed the importance of embedding equality and diversity across the College and the need to collect more data with regards to recruitment, employee relations, promotions and reward. She also stated that the Human Resources department was currently under-resourced with taking this forward.

She further stated that the College had previously been awarded the two ticks - positive about disability, but no minimum criteria had actually been set for candidates to ensure that they were interviewed in accordance with the scheme. She stated that these initiatives would need to be taken forward and that she would focus on progressing them.

It was also reported that the College had been under pressure to publish information on staff and students by 31 January 2013.

It was also reported that the Equalities strategy would be drafted before 6 April 2013.

12 STAFF DEVELOPMENT- HoD INDUCTION

Received:

Staff Development update (12-417)

The Staff Development Manager stated that this had been the first time she had specifically organised the event and that the feedback received from it had been very

valuable. She reported that the event went well as they were able to listen and find out what people wanted. She explained that when Head of Departments were appointed, they were only given job descriptions but no explanation or clear direction was given with regard to accountability, what responsibilities they had or who they could delegate to.

The Committee members agreed that Heads of Department have many demands on their time and have to learn on the job and that HR issues can be very time consuming. It was felt that a combined meeting with Finance and Human Resources would be useful for a new Head of Department as this would enable them to discuss what their departmental aspirations would be, taking into consideration the implications from a finance and human resources point of view.

The Interim Director of Human Resources stated that there would soon be an employment law update workshop designed for new and existing Heads of Department.

The Committee members also discussed the importance of a handover period and getting the new incoming head of department involved with meetings six months prior to starting their new role.

13 MAXIMISING HR COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS

The Chair of the Committee asked members what they thought would make the Committee as useful as possible for the College. To frame the discussion, the Interim Director of Human Resources outlined the remit of the HR department. The core HR delivery model is of Business Partners being the first point of contact delivering professional HR related areas such as employee relations, advisory, recruitment, organisational change support and development, policies, reward and job evaluation, whilst the HR Systems and Information Manager focused on areas such as the Pyramid system, i-grasp, freedom of information requests and data management interfacing with Payroll.

The Registrar and Secretary informed the Committee of her Vision for the future which emphasised the re-structure of the current support services. She explained that the communications with staff had already begun and that the first element of the project was to move the support services to 'professional services'. She stated that cultural change would be required as the project focused on clustering the departments into five main professional service areas.

The new Professional Services would form Corporate Services, HR Services, Students and Alumni Services, Information and Information Technology Services, Governance and Legal Services.

In addition to the above there would also be a Strategic Projects Office, Marketing Intelligence and Policy and Marketing and Communications. These were at pre-consultation stage and subject to change.

The Registrar and Secretary said there would have to be matrix management linkages to the Pro-Wardens so that Professional services could be developed.

It was reported that the Human Resources department would be at the heart of the restructure, as they would be required to support the cultural change. With the new Director of Human Resources starting in January 2013, it would be a priority to have the department properly sourced to support the staff that would be delivering the changes. A

preliminary symbol of this would be for the department to move to Deptford Town Hall, which was very much at the hub of running affairs of the College.

The Committee further discussed the issues prevailing staff surveys in the College and the nervousness behind this. It was noted that a lot of organisations do have staff surveys as this allowed strategic planning.

The Committee agreed that the strategic areas which the Committee would look at going forward would be staff experience and Occupational Health- emphasis on long term sickness, work planning and policy development, the latter being chosen as a routine standardised agenda item and a structured consideration around retirement issues.

14 RETIREMENT PROJECT

Dr Andrea Gilroy reported that she discovered a gap in Staff Development with regard to retirement planning and had initially planned to hold staff development workshops. However, as she began her research she discovered that the landscape of retirement had vastly changed so she had decided to investigate further.

It was reported that the College did not currently have any policies on retirement or older workers and following her research she discovered that how people left their employer affected the quality of the experience of their retirement life.

The Chair stated that this was a very interesting and topical piece of work following the repeal of the default retirement age. Unlike Oxford and Cambridge Universities the College does not have an Employers Justified Age of retirement and we may want to initiate a College wide conversation in light of the legislative change.

The Committee discussed the importance of the Alumni service developing initiatives for retired people, as there had been an enormous potential for the College to develop these staff-College longer-term relationships.

The Registrar and Secretary agreed for a Task and Finish workgroup to be set up and led by Dr Andrea Gilroy. The aim of the group would be to implement the work around retirement. The deadline for this would be by Easter 2013.

15 NEXT MEETING

Noted:

that the next meeting of HR Committee would take place on 4 March 2013.

Fatma Ali
HR Business Partner
November 2012